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January 27, 2005

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Chair Pro Tem  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: David Sanders, Ph.D.  
Director

Paul Higa, Acting Chief Probation Officer  
Probation Department

**JANUARY 27, 2004 MOTION BY SUPERVISORS MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH AND  
ZEV YAROSLAVSKY RE: PROGRESS OF THE EDUCATION COORDINATING  
COUNCIL**

On January 27, 2004, your Board officially supported the creation of the Education Coordinating Council (ECC or Council) to improve the educational outcomes for foster and probation youth with shared responsibilities between the County, cities and school districts. Further, your Board directed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department to make quarterly reports on the progress of the ECC.

The Council has accomplished bringing together top level administrators from County and community agencies to address issues identified in the 2004 Education Summit report impacting foster and probation youth, and to work as a collaborative to develop a blueprint for achievement. The Council has consultants to aid in the facilitation of these goals.

The following is the fourth quarterly report prepared from material provided by Sharon Watson, consultant for the Council.

### **Organization:**

- On November 3, 2004 the Board of Supervisors authorized the creation of the Education Coordinating Council (ECC) by a unanimous vote, setting its purpose and initial membership and directing that an Organizational Planning Meeting be held in November and the first ECC Meeting in January 2005.
- On November 8, 2004 LA County Office of Education (LACOE) Superintendent, Darline Robles, hosted a meeting of school districts with large numbers of foster and probation youth, to discuss the newly established ECC and their role with respect to the Council. Superintendents or representatives from the following districts attended: Lancaster School District, Wilsona School District, Antelope Valley Union Joint High School District, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), Pomona USD, Compton USD, and Long Beach USD. Judge Nash, Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court, Miriam Krinsky, Executive Director of the Children's Law Center (CLC) and Sharon Watson, lead consultant for the ECC made a presentation to those assembled. They talked about the need for the ECC, the steps leading to its creation, what the Council hoped to achieve, how its work would be accomplished, and why the school districts' participation was essential to the Council's work. All present voiced strong support for the Council. In addition, those superintendents who will serve as Council members agreed to also serve as communicators with neighboring school districts, convening area or regional meetings to share information and gather ideas.
- On November 15, 2004 the Organizational Planning Meeting was held at the Children's Court. The meeting included those who had been most involved in helping to launch the ECC, as well as additional stakeholders. Almost 40 people participated, including former foster youth, foster parents, DCFS, Probation, Department of Mental Health, Chief Administrative Office, County Counsel, the Juvenile Court, Cal State LA, LACOE, LAUSD, Pasadena USD, Lancaster School District, Compton USD, Antelope Valley Union Joint High School District, Court Appointed Special Advocate, Public Defender, Children's Commission, Children's Planning Council, Casey Family Programs, Arts Commission, Association of Community Human Services Agencies, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Supervisorial Districts and the CLC. After an update regarding the establishment of the Council, its proposed membership and a report of the findings from the consultant/stakeholder interviews, the group identified some key elements for the blueprint for educational achievement to be developed during 2005.
- On December 16, 2004 the first meeting of the ECC Planning Group was held. This group of approximately 25 people, which will oversee the development of the blueprint, considered what it should look like and what work groups might be needed to propose short and long-term actions for the blueprint. They also

helped plan the agenda for the ECC's January meeting and developed some specific recommendations to present to the ECC at that meeting.

- The initial membership for the ECC was finalized with the development of the agenda and material for the first meeting scheduled on January 19, 2005.
- Two additional consultants were hired for the Council. They are Jacquelyn McCroskey, D.S.W. and Carrie Dunbar Watson.

Jacquelyn McCroskey, D.S.W., is serving as the part-time Data/Information Sharing consultant. An Associate Professor of Social Work at USC, she serves on the First 5 LA Commission, the City Commission for Children, Youth and Their Families, the Children's Planning Council and the Policy Roundtable for Child Care, in addition to other policy-making groups. She has instilled the need to focus on outcomes and quality data in major planning efforts throughout the County and was recently recognized as Social Worker of the Year by the state of California. Ms. McCroskey has led many Los Angeles County efforts to collect key data on children and families including: the creation of the County's five outcome areas for children, the first Children's Score Card and first Data Match of children and families served across multiple county departments, as well, as a set of school readiness indicators for children 0-5. She has also written numerous seminal reports. Ms. McCroskey will be responsible for: facilitating agreements between county departments and school districts to share aggregate data on enrollment, attendance, school performance and educational histories of dependent and delinquent youth; piloting test methodologies for matching data and developing report formats to ensure that data match results are clear, useful and informative for multiple stakeholder groups; and identifying existing sources of data on child care, preschool, K-12 and higher education for DCFS and probation youth.

Carrie Dunbar Watson is the Council's full-time Program Director. She has a Ph.D. from Howard University and during her graduate work completed field service assignments and internships in a variety of settings. Among these was a residential treatment center for foster youth, preparing psychological and educational assessments of probation youth for the Superior Court, working in the Washington D.C. jail, and working with middle school special education students. Since coming to Los Angeles, she has served as a consultant to the LA County Emancipation Program Design Team, to First 5 LA's Partnerships for Families Initiative, and to LA County's Service Integration Action Plan Access to Services Workgroup. For the past two years, she has been the Education Director for United Friends of the Children, working with foster youth ages 12 to 23 on college readiness and success in school. Her major responsibility will be to coordinate the development of the blueprint that will guide the work of the ECC. She will help assemble, convene and assist the various Council Work

Groups to propose, and begin implementation of a set of short and long term actions that will raise educational achievement for foster and probation youth. Ms. Watson is currently working with LAUSD to secure a part-time school systems navigation expert who will round out the ECC consultant team.

- The consultants located dedicated space within the Hall of Administration for the Education Coordinating Council (Room 745) and set up the office in mid-December. They have worked with the County Graphic Arts Division to create a logo, letterhead and business cards for the Council. They have developed some initial ECC materials, such as a fact sheet and a brief history document (Key Activities/Events Leading to the Creation of the ECC) with the assistance of the ECC's Communications consultant.

#### **Program Developments:**

- The CLC brought together the agencies for the 2003 and 2004 Education Summits and published a comprehensive report. The report included a set of findings and recommendations in the areas of: empowering caregivers and service providers; data systems/information sharing; early childhood education; role of the judiciary; school stability; special education; non-public schools, and probation youth issues. Four hundred copies of this report were distributed locally, statewide and nationally. This report will serve as the starting place for the ECC work groups, which will begin by considering the proposed recommendations relating to their program area.
- The CLC worked with the Juvenile Court to develop a WIC 317(e) Panel of Education Attorneys and Advocates to help meet youth educational needs. It initiated a program with Cal State LA to use Master's and Ph.D. students as education consultants to work in conjunction with Children's Law Center attorneys and staff on specific cases, and to address systemic issues and reforms.
- The CLC presented the ECC's work at two national, two California and numerous local conferences and training sessions focused on foster care educational issues. In addition, the CLC formed a collaborative of California education, advocacy and other interested groups to address:
  - Training on education issues and the development of a series of fact sheets on special education issues, AB 3632/Mental Health Services, behavioral assessments of disabled children, holders of educational rights, and laws regarding non-public school placement
  - Development of an education awareness campaign
  - Development and statewide implementation of best practices.

- A first time countywide meeting of Foster Youth Liaisons, employed by LACOE, was held on January 6, 2005. The Liaisons were informed about the ECC, how the ECC can help them do their work and determined what support or assistance they will need to fulfill their new responsibilities under AB 490. Training needs and the connection/overlap with McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaisons were also addressed.

**Data:**

- The consultants held two meetings with LAUSD regarding the data needed to achieve the ECC's mission. Efforts are under way to create a data match between DCFS and LAUSD to determine the total number of foster youth in the district. Further, it was agreed that attendance and achievement data is needed by the ECC to properly assess the educational progress of foster and probation youth. Data that will be needed from the schools include such basic elements as grade levels achieved, grades, proficiency test scores, whether an IEP (Individual Education Plan) has been created, disciplinary actions, absences, etc.
- The consultants initiated an environmental scan of protocols and programs across the U.S. that have been designed to address the educational needs of children and youth in out-of-home care. This information will be very useful in formulating Los Angeles County efforts.
- The consultants began collecting local, state and national educational data from a variety of sources, including research on educational outcomes for foster and probation youth, to inform the Council's planning efforts.

**Outreach:**

- The CLC has developed working relationships with attorneys and other advocates across the country to:
  - Track national trends and determine whether there are effective programs that are suitable for implementation in LA County
  - Develop best practices from those most knowledgeable about foster and probation youth educational issues
  - Build support for eliminating barriers to academic achievement for foster and probation youth
  - Explore the feasibility of legislative remedies
- The consultants began community outreach activities by meeting with the 8 SPA and American Indian Children's Council conveners on November 16, 2004 and participating in the SPA 8 School Readiness Conference (Advocates in Action)

on December 4. A communications plan has been drafted and many more meetings/forums are being planned for early 2005.

**Funding:**

- The consultants have identified an initial list of potential private funders to sustain the work of the ECC in 2005 and beyond, and held a preliminary meeting with one major Los Angeles foundation.
- Representatives attended Educate LA's Southern California Education Funders Forum on December 14, 2004 and made contacts there with two family foundations.

**Final Report:**

As directed by your Board, the Council is established, has leadership under Sharon Watson, and will produce an Education Blueprint for foster and probation youth by December 2005. Unless otherwise directed, this will be the final quarterly report on the establishment of the Education Coordinating Council.

If you have questions, please call me or your staff may contact Helen Berberian in our Board Relations Office at (213) 351-5530.

DS:CS:  
GMS:gms

c: Chief Administrative Officer  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel